

our border, including the alarming number of children sent by themselves, the Border Patrol isn't able to properly surveil or apprehend potentially dangerous individuals and substances.

We have experienced migration surges in the past, most recently in 2014 when President Obama called it a humanitarian crisis and then again in 2019. We know how dangerous the journey to our border is for migrants, especially children. We know that spring and summer are often the busiest time periods. In other words, what we are seeing now is just a foreshadowing of what we expect to see in the coming weeks and months.

We also know that these criminal organizations pay attention to what our leaders are saying here in the United States. Congressman CUELLAR and I, when we were in Carrizo Springs, were able to talk to a number of young men, teenagers, and asked how they heard about the border and their ability to get across. They said, well, they saw it on TV or heard from family members here in the United States or saw it on social media that now is the time to come, with a new administration that is not committed to border security, and so this was the time to make their run across the border.

But these organizations do pay attention, and unfortunately the actions of the Biden administration not only contributed to another surge this year, but they also made likely that it would be bigger than any other in recent memory.

The President campaigned on policies that would lead to this very outcome. After all, when you send a message that migrants can come to the United States even with the flimsiest asylum claims and stay for years until they are resolved and don't even really have to show up for their court hearing because of the backlog of 1.2 million cases in our immigration courts, what do we expect to happen?

What the Border Patrol tells me is that this is a combination of push factors and pull factors. The push factors we are familiar with. Who wouldn't want to come to the United States for a better life? Who wouldn't want to avoid the violence and crime associated with some of the gang activity in Central America? We all understand that. But the pull factors are the sense that you can actually successfully get into the United States through illegal means or by making a false asylum claim and then overloading the system and basically navigate your way into the United States without any negative consequences.

I believe we need to set up a system that honors and respects all legitimate asylum claims, but this isn't it. We need to find a way to move the children and other people claiming asylum to the head of the line so they can present their claims to an immigration judge. But, as you can imagine, only about 10 to 12 percent of the asylum claims are actually granted, and if your only con-

cern is making it into the United States, maybe you don't want to go in front of an immigration judge. But then again, those who don't, the immigration judge, when their appointed court date comes, issues a default order of deportation. So if you had a valid asylum claim that would have been granted by a judge, you have lost that by virtue of your nonappearance at your hearing.

Well, Secretary Mayorkas said we are on track to see the highest number of border crossings in almost 20 years, and I can't say that I am surprised. There is simply no way to rewind time and prevent this crisis from happening, but it is absolutely urgent first that the administration acknowledge it and then work with Congress to address it.

I would encourage the President to follow his own advice, which is to listen to the experts. The experts I listen to when I travel to the border are Border Patrol, Health and Human Services, and the Office of Refugee Relocation. Those are the three Federal Government Agencies that deal with this crisis. I would be glad to welcome him to my State and introduce him to the dedicated men and women along the border who provide valuable services but who simply are overwhelmed and undersourced.

The communities in which they live along the border are beautiful, vibrant communities with outstanding local leaders, but they also feel like they have been abandoned by the Federal Government. They are the ones who are disproportionately impacted when you see a flood of humanity come through their borders, and they try their best, through nongovernmental organizations or just out of simple human mercy and sympathy for the plight of these migrants, to help them any way they can. But they, too, are overwhelmed. They are doing everything they can to manage the crisis, which they had no hand in creating, and they should not be expected to manage it without help from the Federal Government that is, indeed, responsible for our border.

Law enforcement, mayors, county judges, nongovernmental organizations—I have a long list of folks that I would be happy to share with the administration if they would be willing to listen. Indeed, one of the most significant things I think that President Biden could do, like he did after the polar vortex, the big freeze we had in Texas, the 120-year weather event—he was good enough to come to our State and talk to the first responders. I think he would benefit greatly if he made another trip on Air Force One down to the border so he could do what I have had the opportunity to do, and that is to talk to the experts and the people on the ground who understand this crisis and who have some, I think, very constructive ideas about how to deal with it.

#### REMEMBERING ROGER SOFER

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, on another matter, nearly 20 years ago, I took my first trip to Israel. I had a good stroke of fortune: I met a brilliant, hilarious, opinionated, larger-than-life man named Roger Sofer. Roger was simply unlike anyone I had ever met before or anyone I have met since. He could captivate a room with anything from a serious discussion of national security and Israel-U.S. policies, to stories from his childhood, to jokes that, well, probably shouldn't be repeated here on the Senate floor.

Roger cared deeply about his family, his Jewish faith, and the many friends he earned throughout his life. I consider myself fortunate to be among those friends, and I would like just to share a few words about my friend Roger, who passed away last week.

As the old saying goes in my State, Roger wasn't born in Texas, but he got there as fast as he could. The incredible story of his life began in Queens, NY. It led him to the University of Tampa on a baseball scholarship as a left-handed pitcher and then to Fort Dix with the Army. He then went back to Florida, where he worked as a cabdriver, home to New York as a sales representative, and then finally to Houston, TX, where he lived when he and I met.

Clearly, young Roger was an enterprising guy. He understood the value of hard work, and even more importantly, he learned about the value of relationships. Roger and his friend Dan Steiner started their own financial planning and insurance firm and quickly found success.

Roger truly cared about everyone he worked with—his clients, his employees, and their families.

That personal attention translated into a thriving business and a lot of rewards in recognition to go along with it. But Roger never let work consume his entire life or take away from the people and causes he cared most about.

Roger grew up in a religious home and inherited a deep appreciation of his Jewish faith. His father Hyman was his hero and instilled in him a love of our country, as well as a love of Israel. Hyman would say, "Don't worry about business, Roger, because if there's no Israel, there will be no business." That thought stuck. Throughout his life, Roger fought to secure a brighter future for our friends and allies in Israel.

In the 1980s, Melvin Dow and Stanford Alexander, two giants in the AIPAC community—the American Israel Public Affairs Committee—asked Roger to help grow the pro-Israel committee in Houston. Well, I know Roger never did anything halfway; he poured his heart and his soul into outreach efforts. When you have somebody as outgoing, passionate, and likable as Roger, you are bound to get results.

Roger's work in Houston was so successful that in 2002 he was asked to serve on AIPAC's National Board, a position he would hold for nearly two

decades. Lucky for me, that is how Roger and I ended up on the same trip to Israel in March of 2002. We visited Israel during the Second Intifada, a time of serious violence and unrest. Little did I know at the time I wouldn't just look to Roger for insight during our trip; he would become a trusted friend and source of advice over the next two decades.

Make no mistake, I wasn't the only one who learned from Roger. As a member of AIPAC's National Board, he would make almost monthly trips to Washington, DC—often with a group of Texans—to advocate for a strong future and a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.

Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care." It only took a few words to realize how much Roger knew because you also saw how much he cared. He cared deeply about Israel, its people, and its success, and became a respected voice on the importance of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. He didn't care if you were a Democrat or a Republican—if you were willing to listen, he was happy to talk. But meetings with Roger weren't limited to conversations about the Middle East or ongoing political tensions; in typical fashion, he peppered every conversation with a lot of fun too.

It wasn't uncommon for Roger to walk into a meeting with a Senator or

a Congressman and show them pictures of his beloved dog, Ginger. It was even less surprising for that person to ask Roger the next time that they saw him, "So, Roger, how is Ginger doing?" He was a big animal lover, and along with dogs, his other great love, interestingly enough, was horses. He loved the animals themselves, as well as the atmosphere and energy at horse tracks. He was such a great handicapper that Rice University sent a statistics class with him to a horse track just so they could see how he did it.

Last year, just days after being diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia, Roger was able to witness the moment every horse enthusiast dreams about. A horse he co-owned named Tiz the Law qualified for the Kentucky Derby. That horse would go on to win the Belmont Stakes and place second in the Run for the Roses—one of Roger's proudest accomplishments.

Yes, Roger was a man of many talents: a left-handed pitcher, an expert handicapper, an amateur comedian, a skilled storyteller, and an effective advocate. Above all, though, Roger's greatest skill was his ability to live fully and authentically. He valued his relationships above all else, and he could turn a complete stranger into a friend with just a few words. I believe our friendship was proof of that.

Sadly, I, along with my wife Sandy, send condolences to Roger's beloved

family, including his wife Linden; his children, Nicole, Scott, Jennifer, and Rebecca; as well as his grandchildren, Elizabeth, Sam, and Beau.

Roger lived an extraordinary life, and he leaves behind an unforgettable legacy. I am grateful to have known this man.

I yield the floor.

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ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY,  
MARCH 22, 2021

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 3 p.m. on Monday, March 22, 2021.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:35 p.m., adjourned until Monday, March 22, 2021.

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#### CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 18, 2021:

##### CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WILLIAM JOSEPH BURNS, OF MARYLAND, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BRIAN P. MCKEON, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES.

##### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

XAVIER BECERRA, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.